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Reading for Heuristics, Review of Cream of the Crop: The Impact of Elite Education in the Decade After College by H. Katchadourian and J. Boli (1994, Basic Books)

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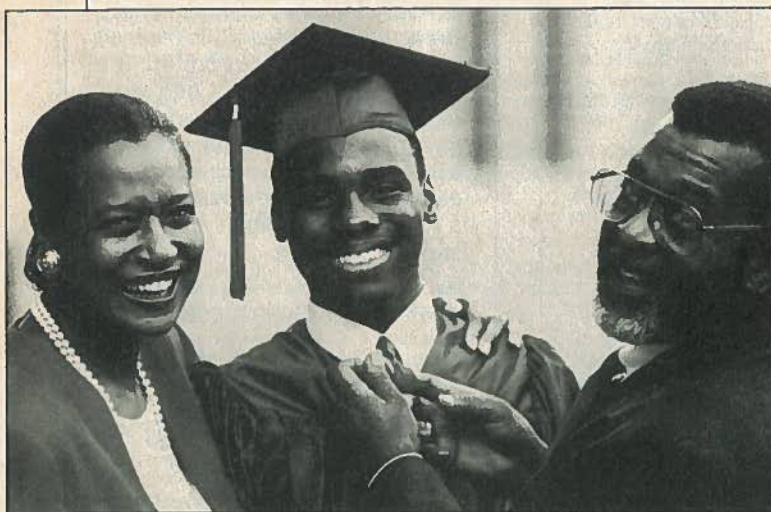
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The Challenge:

Developing a fair and unbiased teacher certification testing program.

- The Illinois legislature wanted to be certain that its new teacher certification testing program was fair to all candidates. They realized that this presented a significant challenge, especially because the program was to include more than 50 different tests and thousands of test objectives and questions.

The Answer:

A sophisticated bias prevention procedure from NES.

- **National Evaluation Systems** responded with a creative and comprehensive approach to bias prevention. The process involved Illinois educators in a series of reviews supported by sophisticated statistical analyses of pilot and operational test administration data. The state-appointed Bias Review Committee met periodically during the test development process, reviewing and recommending changes in test content outlines, test objectives, test specifications, and individual test questions. They focused on certain critical objectives where they believed the potential for bias was highest. The committee had a major role in determining what was included in the tests as well as what was excluded.
- Moreover, the Bias Review Committee continues to meet to review program test data and new test materials. This ongoing role reflects the commitment to a program with equity as a fundamental principle.
- The Illinois bias review process—a creative approach to an important challenge. *From National Evaluation Systems.*



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(413) 256-0444

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH



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Table 3
Key Features of Standardized Tests and Performance Assessments
Mentioned by Parents in Interview Responses (n = 33)

Standardized tests		Performance assessments	
Code	n	Code	n
Guess	16	Think	24
Yes/No	15	Imagination	18
Easy	8	Diagnostic	16
Objective	8	Hard	10
Support	6	Unfair	10
Know	4	Know	10
Real life	3	Aligned	9
Norm	3	Subjective	8
		Real Life	6

ity of having children explain their answers in mathematics and being encouraged to express themselves in response to stories they read. Standardized tests were seen as easier and more supportive by some parents because having answer choices communicates what's expected and allows children who aren't very verbal to show what they know; at the same time, parents complained frequently that multiple-choice questions allow children to guess the right answer "25% of the time."

In the context of controversy surrounding educational reform and the development of new forms of assessment, our surveys of parent opinions and extended interviews were remarkably noncontroversial. We do not think it was because this lower and middle-class district has such an unusual population of parents; for example, the religious right is well represented and has been vocal on curricular matters; in our project some parents asked for and took advantage of the opportunity to review "secure" assessments used as end-of-project outcome measures because they wanted to be sure there was no objectionable content.

We attribute the generally favorable response and the absence of any angry or disruptive reactions to two factors that may be replicable and useful elsewhere. First, the changes being proposed were not radical, wholesale changes. It was the climate of the district, and the tone of our questions, such that use of performance assessments did not imply throwing out standardized tests. Second, parents were able to look closely at performance assessment problems, the "stuff" of the reform, before it had been

characterized pejoratively in the local media. When given the chance, parents seemed intrigued with the opportunity to examine in detail questions from both standardized tests and performance assessments. Although nearly all indicated that what they saw on the performance assessments was different from their own test-taking experiences, most were satisfied that the material was challenging and worth learning.

Parents are essential to any educational reform effort. Individually they support their children's learning, and collectively they can unseat professionally developed, research-based curriculum and assessment changes, as has been demonstrated in several states and local districts. It is important to understand parent perspectives on academic standards and what they

think is important for students to learn, not so that past curricular practices will always dictate future curriculum but so that points of agreement can be identified. For example, many parents fear the abandonment of basic skills. Our experience suggests that parents are more likely to be reassured if they see problems like "If you couldn't remember what 8×7 is, how could you figure it out?" or "How would you pick four digits to make the largest sum?" than if reformers lead with calculator use in the early grades. Even considering all the contending views of what it means to achieve academic excellence, there is a large common ground on which to build support for reform.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Reading for Heuristics

Cream of the Crop: The Impact of Elite Education in the Decade After College. Herant Katchadourian and John Boli. New York: Basic Books, 1994. 384 pp.+xiv, \$27. ISBN No. 0-465-04343-7.

Review by JOHN M. BRAXTON
 and JOSEPH B. BERGER
 Vanderbilt University

The effects of college on students is a topic of long-standing interest to scholars in the disciplines of psychology and sociology and in higher education as a field of study. Testimony to such interest are the hundreds of studies that have been summarized in such works as Feldman and Newcomb's *The Impact of College on Students* (1969), Bowen's *An Investment in Learning* (1977), and Pascarella and Terenzini's

How College Affects Students (1991). One question pursued by some scholars interested in the effects of college on students is: Does the quality of the college or university attended make a difference in the cognitive development, attainment of status in society, the inculcation of attitudes and values, and psychosocial development of students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991)?

The benefits of attending an elite university is the topic pursued by the volume *Cream of the Crop: The Impact of Elite Education in the Decade After College*. This book focuses on the life histories of graduates of Stanford University 10 years after their graduation. The authors use the preface to pose three major issues as the central focus of the book. First, they address general questions about the effect of an elite education on the lives of graduates from elite institutions. Second, they explore ways in which elite education does or does not promote appropriate educational and social equality for various groups in the meritocratic tradition. Finally, they analyze the ways in which students' intellectual and vocational orientations affect the patterns of their lives in early adulthood.

The first chapter sets the tone for the rest of the book. Two biographical sketches of very different Stanford graduates provide a glimpse at some issues faced in the first 10 years after graduation. They also serve as marker cases for the remainder of the chapter, so that Katchadourian and Boli can refer to those two cases as illustrations of the points they wish to make. The

rest of the chapter is devoted to explaining the purpose of the book. This includes a brief overview of the original study (incorporating a review of the different types of students—careerists, intellectuals, strivers, and the unconnected—initially developed from students' orientations to scales measuring careerism and intellectualism), an explanation of the follow-up study, a description of the educational elite in America, an analysis of the historical and cultural context of this class of college graduates, and a very brief foray into the conceptual foundations of life stage theory.

The second chapter makes use of multiple biographical summaries to illustrate the different typologies and their associated characteristics during the students' collegiate experience. Chapter three focuses on influences on career choices and paths, including a discussion of the role of graduate education in the career paths of the educational elite. This is immediately followed by a discussion of the process of career development, including examination of timelines, stages, and change. Chapter five then deals with a summary of the career accomplishments of this group. Chapters six, seven, and eight follow a similar pattern to the previous three chapters, focusing on personal and family life rather than on careers. Chapter nine, "Beyond the Self," focuses on the intellectual pursuits, goals, and development of these people. The last chapter summarizes the impact of the Stanford experience over a 10-year period and

hypothesizes what the next 10 years might look like for this cohort.

This book is generally well written, coherently organized, and reads quickly. The authors do a commendable job of interspersing theoretical discussions, their research findings, and descriptive biographical cases. Most chapters follow a similar pattern of organization in which they begin with illustrative biographical cases, followed by a discussion of the relevant issues, and they conclude with an analysis of differences by typological category, gender, and ethnicity. Nevertheless, some points are made with multiple examples, where one would suffice. At other times a wide range of related material is covered in a chapter, but never sufficiently tied together in a succinct manner. Short concluding sections or summaries of the main points in each chapter would have greatly enhanced the book.

Although marriage, child rearing, and leisure activities are facets of quality of life that have been the focus of previous research on college effects (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), little or no research has addressed whether these indices of quality of life are affected by institutional quality. The *Cream of the Crop: The Impact of Elite Education in the Decade After College* takes a needed first step in filling this research gap by focusing on the process of mate selection, the distribution of household responsibilities, commitment to marriage, age of first child, childcare, and the rate of divorce, and

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NBME MEDICAL EDUCATION RESEARCH FUND 1995-96 Request for Proposals

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) announces its first competition for grant awards to support advances in medical education research. The program will provide support for projects that show promise of contributing new knowledge and understanding of educational measurement and curricular and program evaluation methodology in medical schools.

The NBME Medical Education Research Fund was established to expand opportunities in medical education evaluation and research consistent with the National Board's mission and strategic goals. Eligible applicants include LCME and AOA accredited medical schools. Four grants of up to \$50,000 for up to two years of support will be announced in March 1996.

The application receipt deadline is December 11, 1995. For further information and application forms, contact the NBME Office of Research Support; 3750 Market Street; Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 590-9657 or FAX (215) 590-9755.

1996-97 TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TOEFL) POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION: One person will be selected to conduct research and development with ETS staff on the TOEFL 2000 project, under the guidance of Dr. Lawrence Frase of the Research Division of Cognitive and Instructional Science and Dr. Carol Taylor of TOEFL Program Direction.

DURATION: This is a 12-month fellowship, which will run from September 1, 1996 through August 31, 1997 with the possibility of renewal for a second year, if warranted by project needs and funding.

GOALS OF THE PROJECT: The TOEFL 2000 project is a research and development effort designed to build a test to replace the current TOEFL test. The primary goals of TOEFL 2000 are to provide a theoretically and psychometrically sound new TOEFL test that meets recognized psychometric standards in terms of fairness, validity, and reliability and results in sound decision making and fairness to examinees; to continue to offer the test internationally; to incorporate appropriate technological capabilities; to provide opportunity for improved and expanded services; and to offer the possibility of continuous improvement in the test beyond the year 2000.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The person selected for this fellowship will be an active participant in the research and development efforts of the project. Specific responsibilities will include reviewing literature on language assessment, writing and evaluating research proposals and reports, participating in the design of research projects, collecting and analyzing data, and other related project activities.

STIPEND: \$35,000 for the 12-month period. Limited relocation expenses, consistent with ETS guidelines, will be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts.

QUALIFICATIONS: The applicant should hold a doctorate in second-language testing or a related field, such as applied linguistics. A background in second-language education and assessment is highly desirable. The applicant should show evidence of a commitment to research, especially language testing research, and to achieving excellence in this field. Recommendations from established scholars in second-language education and assessment would be highly valued.

HOW TO APPLY: There is no formal application form. Applicants should submit:

- A resume of educational and job history
- A description of relevant work, interests, and experience
- Publications and other relevant documents and materials
- Official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate studies
- Letters of recommendation from three people who are familiar with the applicant's work

Materials must be received at ETS by March 30, 1996. Applicants will be notified by April 30, 1996.

CONTACT: Please send all required materials to: Linda J. DeLauro, Mail Stop 16-T, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, Telephone: 609-734-1806, Internet: ldelauro@ets.org.



1996-97

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Charles E. Davis, Director

DESCRIPTION: Up to three fellows will be selected to conduct their own research under the guidance of ETS staff in Princeton, New Jersey, in one of the following areas: psychology; education; sociology of education; psychometrics; statistics; computer science; linguistics; educational, occupational, or vocational testing; educational technology; minority issues; testing issues, including alternate forms of assessment for special populations; testing issues associated with new forms of assessment; or policy research.

DURATION: A typical appointment will run from September 1, 1996 through August 31, 1997 (12 months, including 1 month vacation).

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM: To provide research opportunities to individuals who hold a doctorate in the fields indicated above and to increase the number of women and minority professionals in educational measurement and related fields.

SELECTION: The main criteria for selection will be scholarship and appropriateness of the proposed work for ETS. Affirmative action goals will also be considered in the selection process.

STIPEND: \$35,000 for the 12-month period. Limited relocation expenses, consistent with ETS guidelines, will be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts.

WHO SHOULD APPLY: The program is open to any individual who holds a doctorate in a relevant discipline and provides evidence of scholarship.

HOW TO APPLY: There is no formal application form. Prior to applying, please call for a Research Division description.

Applicants should submit:

- A resume of educational and job history
- A description of research interests and experience
- A detailed proposal describing the research the applicant would like to pursue during the fellowship year (approximately 5 pages)
- Official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate studies
- Letters of recommendation from three people who are familiar with the applicant's work

All application materials must arrive at ETS on or before January 16, 1996. Applicants will be notified by April 1, 1996.

CONTACT: Please direct inquiries and required materials to: Linda J. DeLauro, Mail Stop 16-T, ETS, Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, Telephone: 609-734-1806, Internet: ldelauro@ets.org.



CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION COORDINATOR

The Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC), a charitable not-for-profit organization located in Toronto, is currently seeking an experienced individual for the position of Curriculum and Evaluation Co-ordinator.

Reporting to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the successful incumbent will be responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of a competency-based curriculum. The ongoing development and improvement of the curriculum will involve pilot testing of teaching materials and the revision of these materials to ensure their reliability and validity, conducting ongoing analysis of the curriculum, and preparing proposals for improvements and change. The incumbent will also be required to assist College faculty with the development of instructional materials and evaluation tools and methods. An important component of the responsibilities of this position is the development and implementation of testing methods to determine the effectiveness of curriculum changes implemented.

This challenging position requires an individual with a Masters degree (doctoral preferred) in the area of education, psychology/counseling, or health professions education. Outstanding analytical and communication skills are essential. In addition, extensive knowledge and experience in health professions programme design and development, along with problem-based and performance evaluation, are necessary. A minimum of 5 years' related experience with a successful track record in working with health professions faculty preferred.

Academic ranking and salary are dependent upon experience.

Qualified applicants should apply in writing, including a curriculum vita and three letters of reference. Applications will be accepted until the position has been filled.

Susan Sanderson, Director,
Human Resources
Canadian Memorial
Chiropractic College
1900 Bayview Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 3E6

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EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE

1996-97 NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Eugene Johnson, Director

PROGRAM: One scholar will be selected to conduct research, using the NAEP database, with access to senior NAEP and other ETS staff in Princeton, New Jersey. The research will address important educational policy issues or measurement issues that affect the efficiency or usefulness of NAEP. Studies focused on issues concerning the education of minority students are especially encouraged.

DURATION: A typical appointment would begin on September 1, 1996 and end on June 30, 1997 (10 months).

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM: To provide research opportunities for scholars in the fields indicated above, encourage secondary analyses of NAEP data, and increase the number of minority professionals in educational measurement and related fields.

STIPEND: The stipend and any compensation provided by the scholar's employer will be comparable to that of an ETS researcher who possesses similar training and experience. Scholars will be reimbursed for relocation expenses, concurrent with ETS guidelines, upon presentation of receipts.

SELECTION: The main criteria for selection will be scholarship and relevance to NAEP. Affirmative action goals will also be considered.

QUALIFICATIONS: Applicants should hold a doctorate in a related discipline and provide evidence of scholarship.

HOW TO APPLY: There is no formal application form. Applicants should submit:

- A resume of educational and job history, honors, awards
- A detailed description of research interests and experience
- A detailed proposal of the research the applicant will conduct while at ETS (about 5 pages)
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three individuals who are familiar with the applicant's work and are willing to serve as references

Materials must arrive at ETS by December 1, 1995. Applicants will be notified by January 15, 1996.

CONTACTS: Please send required materials to: Linda DeLauro, Mail Stop 16-T, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, Telephone: 609-734-1806, Internet: ldelauro@ets.org. Direct scientific inquiries to: Dr. Eugene Johnson, Mail Stop 02-T, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, Telephone: 609-734-5305, Internet: ejohnson@ets.org.

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the intellectual interests—reading, music, and art—of elite university graduates 10 years after their graduation.

Educational attainment and the career success of the educationally elite are also addressed by this book. High levels of educational attainment beyond the bachelors degree and career success as measured by income and position are the benefits of attending an elite university chronicled in this volume. These findings, however, serve only to reinforce the outcomes of extant studies on these topics (Kingston & Lewis, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Some provocative findings are also presented in this book. The first of these findings is that having a degree from an elite university minimizes the effects of gender and racial discrimination on career success. Put in the words of the authors, a degree from an elite university has an "uplifting effect" on the career success of women and racial minorities. Another finding is that the choice of one's career is primarily self-determined and is not dependent on other forces typically found to affect career choice. A third finding pertains to intellectual activity external to one's career. About one fifth of these elite university graduates indicate a high degree of involvement in intellectual and cultural activities, and

about one third of them report little or no serious involvement.

Nevertheless, these and other findings reported in this book are best regarded as heuristic. Some fundamental shortcomings to *Cream of the Crop: The Impact of Elite Education in the Decade After College* diminish the degree of confidence we can have in its findings. Although some contrasts to college graduates in general are made, this study did not use a comparison group of graduates of colleges and universities of varying degrees of prestige and quality. Without the ability to make such comparisons, we do not know whether the findings of this volume also obtain for graduates of other types of colleges and universities. Moreover, drawing inferences from findings gathered at one elite university to other elite collegiate institutions is also problematic. These particular flaws are the most troublesome and raise a serious question about whether the impact of an elite collegiate education is being adequately demonstrated in this book.

Two other imperfections also attenuate the contribution made by this work. Although this study used both a mailed survey instrument and personal interviews, neither of these instruments are displayed in this book. Without them, it is difficult for scholars not only to assess the validity of the questions being asked, but also to replicate this inquiry.



IRVING B. HARRIS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY STUDIES at the University of Chicago

The Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago, is pleased to announce a new program, the *Harris Fellowships in Child Policy*. The Program offers a one-year masters of arts for students with at least a masters degree in early childhood development or a related field. Tuition and stipend provided.

For more information, contact:

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hsinf@spcmailhub.spc.uchicago.edu.
EOE/AA.

Another imperfection is that methods used to analyze the interview data are not described.

Scholars will be enticed by some of the findings, but will be troubled by the delineated shortcomings. Individuals interested in the effects of college on students may want to use the findings of this volume as a basis for further research on whether the quality of the college attended makes a difference in the lives of graduates. Others interested in topics such as career development, status attainment, adjustment to marriage, and family life may also find this volume useful. *Cream of the Crop: The Impact of Elite Education in the Decade After College* is worth reading for its heuristics.

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